

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)

A Student Guide to Packaging Waste and EPR Policy

WHAT IS EPR?

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a public policy approach that places greater responsibility on producers and manufacturers for managing the environmental impacts of the packaging they create.

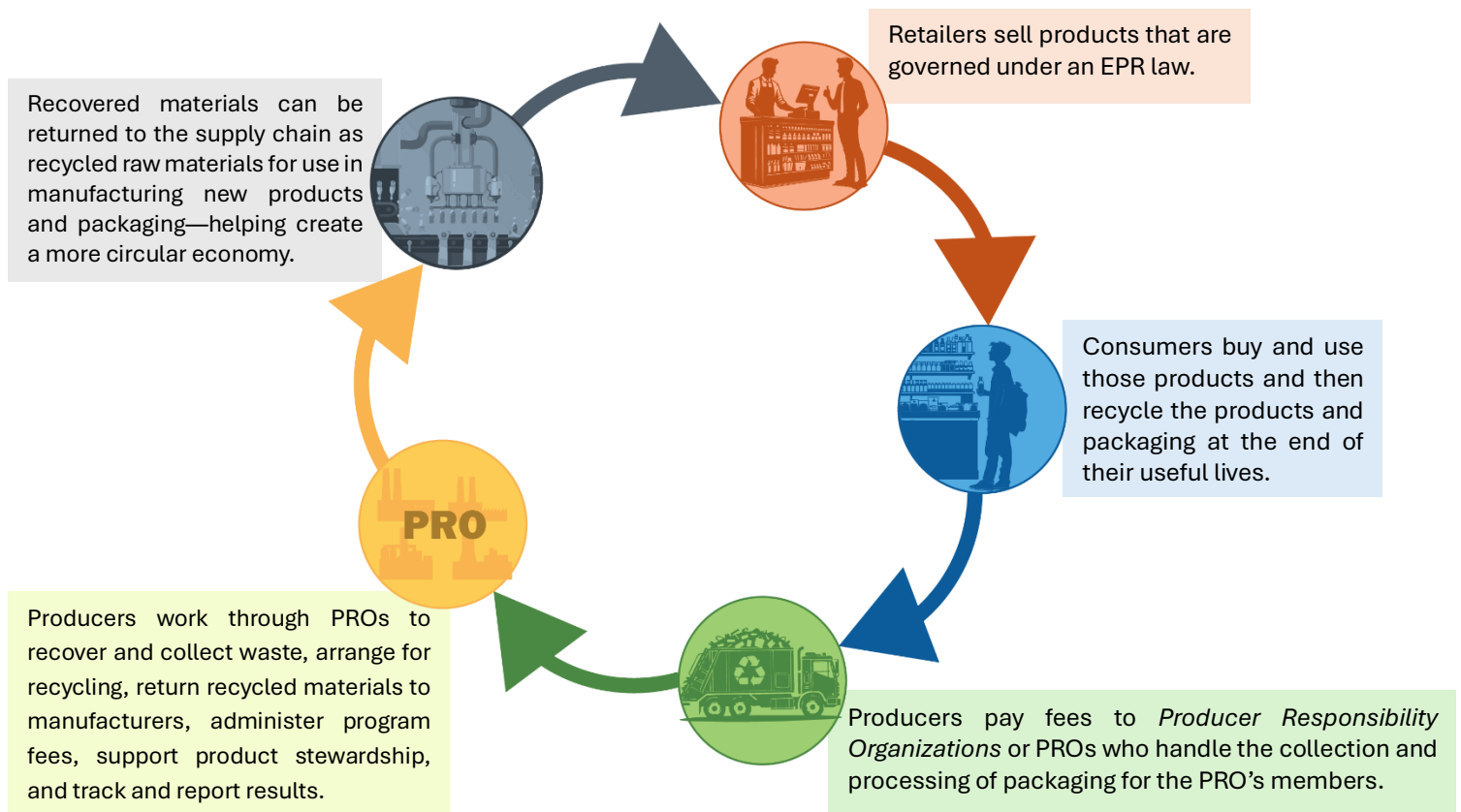
Nowadays, local governments and taxpayers often bear most of the costs associated with collecting, sorting, recycling, and disposing of packaging waste. EPR programs shift some of those responsibilities to the companies that produce packaging.

HOW DOES EPR WORK?

While EPR programs differ from state to state, they generally require producers to:

- Help fund recycling and waste management programs;
- Report information regarding packaging materials;
- Support efforts to improve recycling infrastructure; and
- Encourage the use of packaging that is easier to recycle or generates less waste.

THE EPR LIFECYCLE:



WHY IS EPR BEING DISCUSSED?

Supporters of EPR argue that it can:

- Reduce packaging waste;
- Increase recycling rates;
- Improve recycling infrastructure;
- Encourage innovation in sustainable packaging; and
- Shift costs from taxpayers to producers.

WHAT ARE SOME CONCERNS ABOUT EPR?

Critics of EPR have raised questions regarding:

- Potential increased costs for manufacturers;
- Possible increases in consumer prices;
- Administrative complexity;
- Compliance burdens on businesses;
- Consumers who consume products will bear the cost of the recycling; and
- The effectiveness of government oversight.

WHAT IS A PRO?

Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) are industry-supported organizations that help companies meet their responsibilities under EPR laws. Rather than each producer creating its own recycling system, producers can work through a PRO to **collect and recover waste, arrange for recycling, return recycled materials to manufacturers, administer program fees, support product stewardship, and track and report results.**

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN NEW YORK?

New York lawmakers are considering legislation that would establish an Extended Producer Responsibility program for packaging. The proposal has generated significant discussion among environmental groups, industry organizations, local governments, and policymakers.

WHY SHOULD STUDENTS CARE?

Environmental policy decisions made today will affect future generations. Students can play an important role by:

- Learning about public policy issues;
- Engaging in respectful discussion;
- Participating in surveys and public meetings;
- Communicating with elected officials; and
- Encouraging informed civic participation.

LEARN MORE at EPRFootprint.org

Join New York Students for Responsible Packaging to receive updates, educational resources, and opportunities for civic engagement throughout New York State.